

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEDAN 00029 240749Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 MCT-01 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05

EUR-12 AF-10 HA-05 /105 W

-----115351 241050Z /23

R 240600Z JAN 78

FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 821

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0029

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ID, PORS

SUBJECT: JAN. 24 UPDATE ON ARUN SECURITY SITUATION

REF: MEDAN 09 (NOTAL)

1. JAN. 23 MOBILE/MEDAN OFFICIALS HEARD A REPORT FROM ARUN FIELD THAT BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE LOCAL SECURITY COMMANDER, THREE INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT FOR ACEH (NLFA) OCCURED OVER THE WEEKEND, TWO IN THE ARUN VICINITY IN NORTHEASTERN ACEH AND THE OTHER NEAR SIGLI IN NORTHWESTERN ACEH. ACCORDING TO THESE STORIES, AN INDONESIAN "SECURITY OFFICER" IN PANTU LABU VILLAGE, 30 KILOMETERS FROM ARUN, AND TWO "CURFEW MONITORS" AT BAYI VILLAGE, ON THE ARUN PIPELINE ROAD, HAD BEEN SHOT AND KILLED BY THE NLFA; NEAR SIGLI, AN INDONESIAN MILITARY OUTPOST WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY THE NLFA LEAVING ONE INDONEASIAN SOLDIER DEAD.

2. COL. GUNARSO, THE HEAD OF INTELLIGENCE FOR KOWILHAN I
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEDAN 00029 240749Z

(TERRITORIAL MILITARY COMMAND FOR SUMATRA/WEST KALIMANTAN),
CONFIRMED TO ME JAN. 24 ONLY ONE OF THESE THREE INCIDENTS.
HE SAID NEAR SIGLI IN A SHOOTOUT WITH INDONESIAN FORCES, ONE
MILITARY AND ONE CIVILIAN HAD BEEN KILLED ALONG WITH THREE
NLFA DISSIDENTS. HE HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY SHOOTING OF INDONESIANS
BY THE NLFA NEAR ARUN; HE SPECULATED THAT RUMORS MAY HAVE STARTED
AS A RESULT OF THE CURRENT MILITARY SEARCH AND DESTROY OPERATIONS.

TWO PLANELOADS OF SPECIAL FORCES WERE AIRLIFTED FROM JAKARTA ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO TO LHOK SUKON GAS FIELD AT ARUN AND TO THE SIGLI AREA. THESE FORCES ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED IN FOREST PENETRATION, GUNARSO SAID, AND WERE REQUESTED BY KOWILHAN I TO ASSIST IN THE ACEH SITUATION WHERE THE MAIN LEADERS OF THE NLFA, INCLUDING THOSE NAMED IN THE NLFA CABINET LIST, WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE FLED BACK INTO THE FOREST. HE ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF ARRESTS MADE AND SEVERAL NLFA DISSIDENTS KILLED IN ACEH IN RECENT WEEKS. HE INSISTED THAT THE SHOOTOUTS WERE A NORMAL PART OF CURRENT MILITARY OPERATIONS AND NOT A SIGN OF OF ESCALATION OF NLFA ACTIVITY IN ACEH.

3. ALTHOUGH MOBIL/BECHTEL OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY WERE TOLD IN JAKARTA BY INDONESIAN OFFICERS THAT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE BAND INVOLVED IN THE NOV. 29 SHOOTING OF AMERICANS HAD BEEN ARRESTED, GUNARSO DID NOT SUBSTANTIATE THIS CLAIM TO ME. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN ARRESTS MADE IN WHICH INDONESIAN SECURITY FORCES HOPED TO OBTAIN SUFFICIENT INFORMATION FOR APPREHENDING THE MAIN MEMBERS OF THAT BAND, INCLUDING DR. MUCHTAR HASBI, WHO IS SUPPOSED TO BE ITS LEADER.

4. GUNARSO INDICATED DURING OUR CONVERSATION THAT HASAN DE TIRO LINGERS IN INDONESIAN INTELLIGENCE THINKING AS AN ACTIVE LEADER OF THE NLFA; HE SUSPECTED THAT DE TIRO MIGHT BE IN THE ACEH JUNGLE NOW BUT HAD NOT PROOF OF IT. IN ANY CASE, HE WAS SURE THAT DE TIRO HAD TRAVELLED WIDELY TO LIBYA, THE SOVIET

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEDAN 00029 240749Z

UNION AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN FUNDS FOR THE NLFA. HE SAW THE NLFA AS BEING ABOUT HALF OLD HARD CORE ACEH SEPARATISTS WHO HAVE TRIED, WITH LIMITED SUCCESS, TO RECRUIT YOUNGER MEMBERS, INCLUDING SOME STUDENTS. I MENTIONED THE IMPRESSION I HAD FROM AN ONGOING TRIAL IN MEDAN OF AN ALLEGED KOMANDO JIHAD TERRORIST THAT THE NLFA AND KOMANDO JIHAD WERE BEING LINKED TOGETHER AND THAT THE OLD DARUL ISLAM LEADER, DAUD BEUREUH, WHO LIVES NEAR SIGLI, WAS BEING CONNECTED TO BOTH OF THEM. GUNARSO REPEATED PREVIOUS OPINIONS GIVEN BY KOWILHAND OFFICERS TO ME THAT THE TWO MOVEMENTS WERE NOT CONNECTED; HE SAW DAUD BEUREUH AS A VENERATED OLD LEADER OF THE ISLAMIC STATE MOVEMENT WHO GAVE ONLY SOME MORAL SUPPORT TO THE KOMANDO JIHAD (GUNARSO MENTIONED, IN PASSING, THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES HOPE TO HAVE DAUD TESTIFY AT THE TRIAL SOON). HE SAW THE NLFA, ON THE OTHER HAND, AS AN ACEH SEPARATIST MOVEMENT MORE THAN AN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT. AGAIN, CONTRADICTING THE NEWS STORIES FROM THE TRIAL SESSIONS, HE SAID HE KNEW OF NO EVIDENCE PROVING THAT KOMANDO JIHAD, OR FOR THAT MATTER, DE TIRO, HAD SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING MONEY FROM LIBYA.

5. COMMENT: SINCE KOWILHAN OFFICIALS ARE ALWAYS ANXIOUS TO ASSURE ME THAT EVERYTHING IN ACEH IS UNDER CONTROL, I DO NOT

ENTIRELY DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER INFORMATION WILL DEVELOP IN SUPPORT OF THE RUMORED EFFORTS OF THE NLFA TO TAKE REVENGE ON LOCAL VILLAGERS REGARDED AS INFORMERS, AS THE INDONESIANS SAID TO HAVE BEEN SHOT NEAR ARUN OVER THE WEEKEND WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN. AND WHILE GUNARSO MAY HIMSELF MINIMIZE THE DANGER OF DAUD BEUREUH'S INFLUENCE ON THE ISLAMIC AND NLFA SEPARATISTS MOVEMENTS, THERE ARE AMPLE SIGNS THAT OTHER INDONESIAN OFFICIALS DO INDEED CONSIDER HIM A SECURITY RISK AND THAT IT IS NO ACCIDENT HIS NAME IS BEING MENTIONED PROMINENTLY AT THE KOMANDO JIHAD TRIAL IN AN ATTEMPT TO DESCREDIT HIM IN THE PUBLIC EYE.

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